

Testimony SB1

STATE ADMINISTRATION
Exhibit No. 2
Date 1-8-07
Bill No. SB-1

Chairman Squires and Members of the Committee;

For the record, my name is Lois Fitzpatrick and I represent the Montana Library Association. MLA has close to 600 members throughout the state working in public, school, academic and special libraries.

MLA is opposed to this bill. The bill has a chilling effect on people who are testifying or who are not able to attend the hearing and they request that someone handout their testimony for them. Even though the bill does state that the person reviewing the written materials may not withhold the papers even if the reviewer does not agree with the statements, who really knows if that will be followed in the future.

Montana has always prided itself on the open government that we have. That the ordinary citizen can feel free to come to the Capitol and to testify on a bill. This legislation may cut back on the number of citizens who will feel able to testify.

Our winters can be bad and there are times when people who were going to testify are not able to attend a hearing. Will their testimony not be allowed to be handed in?

Logistically there is a concern. How soon before the hearing does the information have to be to the chair of the committee or the leader of a house? There are many items that the person reviewing the material must identify and approve. How much time will this take? How soon must the chairperson or house leader have to tell the person that they may or may not distribute the information?

This may also cause testimony to become longer. We all strive to speak to the point and within 5 minutes. If I am not able to distribute information to the committee, I will have to include this material in my testimony.

I understand there is a problem with how much material is given to a committee, however, I do not believe this bill is the best way of tackling that problem.

Yours truly,



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